[311 cont.]

equally from heat and cold.

The violence of the wind brings enormous flakes of snow into the tent through the door and the opening at the top, and sometimes a storm blows over the felt edifice with all its occupants. The children, half-naked, come out from under the felts or the sheepskins in which they are usually enveloped, throw themselves on the hot cinders, burn their hands and feet, and utter cries which pierce the heart.

In order to protect themselves from the misfortunes and unpleasantness which winter causes them, the Kazaks choose for their winter camp the middle of some grove, reeds, hills, or the sands in the southern part of the steppes.

We have said earlier that their camps, winter as well as summer, cannot be exactly determined and are not always occupied by the same inhabitants. Nevertheless, they are quite constant in the choice of the former, because not all localities present the [312] necessary conditions for a winter camp to the same degree and because the depth of the snow does not allow them to move.

Some Kazaks, especially those who are nearest to the Russian border, collect supplies of fodder in the autumn, dig pits in the ground to put their livestock in, and build fences of wattling, when the place permits it, to protect themselves from the wind, especially the north wind.

The suffering they are caused by the frosts and storms makes them celebrate the return of spring with rapture. They spend most of the summer days sleeping and drinking kumiss, and they eat very little meat. At night they gather to enjoy the pleasures of the table together, and to tell each other stories, or to listen to musicians who play the chibyzga or the balalaika.

But the autumn is the best time of the year for them. It is in this season that they undertake their longest trips (1), and they

1. We will note in passing that superstition prevents the Kazaks from undertaking long trips when the moon is on the wane.